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ABSTRACT

This document is intended to help groups raise their level of awareness about what it feels like to have difficulty with reading or math, look at how varying levels of literacy and numeracy can affect the quality of their group's activities, and look at ways in which they can overcome literacy- and numeracy-related problems. The beginning of the document explains its aims and how it should be used. The first section contains teacher and student materials for exercises designed to demonstrate how it feels to have difficulty with reading or math and to what extent literacy and numeracy skills are needed in order to carry out an everyday group activity. Those exercises involve reading a mirror image of a handwritten message, doing math after hearing unusual explanations for solving subtraction problems, and making an assessment of written materials in the room in which the group meets. The second section is intended to demonstrate how some group members' participation can be inadvertently prevented if the group's modes of communicating depend heavily on reading and writing. The section also points out ways groups can depend less on reading, writing, and basic math activities. Section 3 offers exercises intended to help groups make at least one change that would make the group more welcoming or accommodating to members who have literacy or numeracy difficulties. Section 4 is an exercise designed to help group members evaluate the document and its use. (CML)

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WRITE THEN - LET'S CHANGE!

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THIS PACK

- **LOOKS AT** THE EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN COMMUNITY GROUPS
- **OFFERS** AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROUPS TO WORK TOGETHER MORE EFFECTIVELY

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WRITE THEN - LET'S CHANGE

written by

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ABOUT THE PACK

This section tells you about the aims of the pack and how to use it. It also gives some suggestions to help group leaders.

Aims of the Pack

Most people don't know what it feels like to have difficulty with literacy or numeracy and so they don't often think about the problems which can arise for a group when some of its members lack confidence in reading, writing or maths.

We hope this pack will help those groups who want to:-

- raise their own level of awareness of what it feels like to be an individual with a literacy and/or numeracy difficulty.

- look at how varying levels of literacy and numeracy can affect the quality of their group's activities.

- look at ways in which they can overcome literacy and numeracy related problems.

Objectives of the Pack

The exercises in this pack are designed to:

1. Help you understand what it feels like to have problems with reading

2. Help you understand what it feels like to have problems with writing

3. Help you understand what it feels like to have problems with numeracy

4. Recognise the extent to which literacy and numeracy skills are needed in order to carry out simple everyday tasks

5. Consider what might happen to a group's performance when its channels of communication are restricted

6. Explore alternative forms of communication other than those using literacy and numeracy skills

7. Explore ways of involving individuals with literacy and numeracy difficulties to a greater degree in the group's activities

8. Plan and organise new ways to:

   a. Increase the group's awareness of what it feels like to have a literacy and/or numeracy problem

   b. Make the group's office/meeting rooms/information etc more accessible to people with literacy and/or numeracy difficulties

   c. Support members of the group or others who use their facilities and who want to improve their literacy and/or numeracy skills

How to use the pack

Each group will have its own ideas as to the best way to use the pack. To get the best out of it we would suggest that no more than 20 people are involved in working on it at any one time.
In testing out the pack, we found that it took us about three to three and a half hours to go through each of the three sections. The timings given are based on this. You may want to take more or less time.

The pack can be used in a number of ways. You may decide to:

- hold a series of group meetings over a number of weeks
- have three half-day workshops
- do it all in one or more whole days

Whatever your group decides it is important to remember two things.

- each section is a unit in itself and should therefore be completed in one session
- the time lapse between each session should not be too long.

We suggest that wherever possible the pack should be used over a period of three consecutive half-day workshops.

There are some things you will need in order to carry out the exercises. We have made some suggestions as to how you might do things, but you may have other ideas as to what best suits your group and what is available to you.

USING THE PACK IN A GROUP

GROUP LEADERS' NOTES

In talking about a 'group leader', we mean someone who is willing to read through the pack in advance and organise the activities. For each section you will also need someone to make sure that things are going OK. This might be a different person each time.

We recognise that some people using this pack will already have a great deal of experience in working with groups. These notes are intended in the main for those with little or no experience of leading groups. They do, however, contain some information on how the pack should be used. It would be useful, therefore, for all group leaders to read the notes.

Why work in a Group?

The issues facing people in their lives are often complex. People can feel isolated when trying to find the solutions to their problems. Working in a group can help people to understand that others have the same difficulties and anxieties and that there is no expert who has all the answers and that no-one is totally ignorant.

Each person has a different view and information to offer, based on their own experiences. By sharing information, opinions and ideas, a group can find new solutions to a problem. They can also help each other to gain confidence in tackling the problem. Within a group each person is both a teacher and a learner. This is particularly true where reading and writing are involved. For example, just because someone lacks confidence in writing things down, it does not mean that she does not have a lot to say.

The exercises in this pack have been designed to reflect this way of working.

The role of the group leader.

The aim of this pack is to help people to learn and to make decisions about the literacy and numeracy involved in the group's activities. People learn most effectively when involved in an active process which is relevant to their lives. They will be most committed to decisions which they have helped to make: this includes contributing ideas and opinions. People do not learn effectively nor feel part of a group when they are sitting passively listening to information which is being passed on to them by a group leader. For a workshop to be successful and for the group to benefit from the skills and awareness of each participant, everyone must be able to work together on an equal basis:

- sharing, discussing and shaping ideas together
- learning and making plans collectively

If everyone is going to be able to take a full and equal part in the group, someone must take on a particular role as 'group leader'. The leader's job is to ensure good communication and to make it easy for the group to learn, to discuss and to plan. In order to make the most of the exercises in this pack we suggest that the group leader should also be someone who can understand the group, identify the problems the group is experiencing and help it to deal with them constructively. If possible the leader should be a member of the group or, if not, someone who is aware of the needs and goals of the group. It does not have to be the same person who leads every session.

Finally, and most importantly, remember that, when it comes to reading and writing, the people in the group may have different levels of ability or speed. It is therefore a good idea to read through aloud any written material that you are handing out to the group. If there is writing to be done, check whether anyone needs any help in getting things down on paper.

Preparation for using the pack

It is important that you decide on how you will deal with the following questions at an early stage:

Who is coming?
What is the best size for the group?
Where will the group meet?
When will it meet?
Who will be involved in making these decisions and how will the information be made available to others?

Nearer the date of the first meeting you must decide on who will be responsible for the following:

Welcoming group members
Refreshments
Setting up furniture/equipment
Starting off the group meeting.

Group Size

The size of the group is also important. Most people find it difficult to speak in a large group. In many cases the large group will divide into smaller groups to encourage participation. When you ask people to do this, encourage them to work with others they do not know well or have not worked with in a group before. This will improve the flow of ideas.

When the large group reforms to share ideas, it is important that you avoid one or two groups giving long reports, these can become boring. It is best to take one point at a time from a group, asking the other groups to add their contribution immediately afterwards.

Getting Started

Most people are a little unsure of themselves in a group setting. They need help in getting to know one another quickly and to feel confident enough to speak out in a group. The best way to do this is to use what are called 'ice-breakers'. The word speaks for itself: these are short exercises that help participants feel comfortable with one another. Below is an example of an ice-breaker that you could use at the first session.

Ask everyone to find a partner. Partners exchange names (if they don't already know one another) and tell each other a little about what they hope to achieve from the workshop. This should take no more than 2 minutes. Return to the large group and each person should introduce their partner, saying something about their partner's feelings about the workshop.

You will most probably find that you will not need an ice-breaker to introduce sessions 2 and 3 of the pack. It may be more appropriate here to introduce an exercise designed to help participants build again on the spirit that was created during the previous session. Below is an example of an exercise that you may like to use.

Ask everyone to find a partner and ask everyone to complete one of these sentences:

What I learned last time we met was.....

Something new I have tried since last time we met is.....

This should take no more than 2 minutes. Return to the large group and each person should give an outline of their partner's response to the question.

The Room Arrangement

How chairs are arranged will have a strong influence on participation in the discussion. All the exercises have been designed with this in mind. As a general rule discussion is more productive when people sit in circles and can see one another's faces. In some cases, however, we have deliberately ignored this rule in order to set up a particular type of situation.

Timing and Pacing

As the group leader, you must also be aware of the time and pacing of the exercises. A suggested time for each exercise has been shown on the work sheets, although you might want to alter this for your group. It is important to tell participants how long they have got to work on an exercise and also to give them warning as to how the time is going.

You must be sensitive to cues from participants during group discussion. If attention seems to be lapsing it is best to take a break or move on to the next topic. Occasionally, if the group is involved in a particular theme, it may be necessary to extend the time allowed for this, but if this is at the expense of another topic it is best to ask the whole group if this is what they want to do.

The Evaluation

Good evaluation is designed to help participants reflect on what they have learnt in the workshop and, at the same time, give them an opportunity to offer constructive comments for the next. It is one of the most important aspects of a workshop, so it is important that you leave enough time for a full evaluation to take place. Unfortunately, more often than not, the evaluation is a rushed event taking place during the last ten minutes of a workshop when participants are tired and enthusiasm is low.

Some people will prefer to do the evaluation on their own, while others may want to work in twos or threes. We leave it to the group to decide how to carry out such evaluation exercises.

You will find then that this pack contains three types of evaluation:

1. At the end of each exercise in sections 1 and 2 you will find short evaluations. These are designed to help participants relate such exercise to their everyday activities. They should last no longer than 5 to 10 minutes.

2. At the end of the pack you will find a general evaluation. This is designed in such a way so that it can be used either at the end of each session or at the end of the pack when all three sessions have been completed.

3. You will also find at the end of the pack an 'Evaluation of the Resource pack'. This has been designed for use by the leader(s).

Feedback

Feedback is a means of bringing ideas together from the small groups. People may then agree to look at these at a later date. Participants call out one point at a time and these are noted down (by someone other than the leader) so that everyone can see. It is important that the person writing the ideas down is not the leader, as the person writing will have her back to the group. Hold onto comments and discussion until all ideas have been collected.

As participants are feeding back it is often best to:

a. summarise each contribution in a few words

b. use key words of the participants, so they recognise their own contribution

c. avoid too much writing - it becomes a distraction

d. ensure that the writing can be read from the other side of the room

e. read through what has been written

When people see their ideas/suggestions written down, they get a sense that their

contributions are taken seriously and they feel accepted by the group.

If you have never led a workshop before you might be concerned about how good you will be as a leader and, therefore, how successful the workshop will be.

Within the group you will already have identified the needs of the group and its goals. As leader it is your role to help the group fulfil these goals through full group participation. There is not a set of rules, or a checklist that could be written down to achieve the participation and openness needed. It would be more helpful to say that a good leader should be constantly assessing the situation.

- try always to be aware of the content of the discussion. That is what the group is talking about and what each person is saying.

- be aware of the non-verbal expressions, what indications participants are giving about their feelings and reactions. They will show this in their tone of voice, their gestures or body language.

- try also to be aware of what these feelings are. It is most important that all members of the group are happy with the decisions being made as, by the end of the workshop, an agenda for the future work should have been prepared. If the leader senses that someone is not happy then they should check this by asking the participant how they are feeling about the decision.

You might notice that a topic is causing a problem or that the group is moving away from the focus of the discussion. This is the point at which you should step in and help the participants to find a solution to the problem or to return to the central theme.

TAKING A LOOK AT READING, WRITING AND BASIC MATHS

This section aims to help you understand what it feels like to be in a situation where you lack confidence in your reading, writing or number skills or where the use of these skills is made difficult for you.

1a READING TIME 55-60 min

● Purpose

In most everyday activities literacy and numeracy skills are involved to some degree. It is often taken for granted that everyone can read, write or perform basic numerical tasks and so the majority of people remain unaware of what it feels like to have a difficulty with either reading, writing or numeracy skills.

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants to identify some of the feelings experienced by a person with a reading difficulty.

● You will need:

* a large sheet of paper or a blackboard
* enough copies of the *'Mirror Writing'* sheet
* enough copies of the *Discussion Sheet* questions for everyone to see
* enough copies of the *Evaluation Sheet*

The Exercise

1. Briefly explain to participants the purpose of the exercise.

2. Ask participants to form a circle with their chairs.

3. Give a copy of the *'Mirror Writing'* sheet to each participant.

4. Choose a participant and ask her to start reading. Let her complete the first line and then ask someone else to carry on. For every line of writing choose someone new to read. Carry on like this until the passage has been read. (In order to make this exercise more effective the leader is encouraged to maintain a sharp element of surprise by choosing participants at random rather than by moving around the circle in a clock-wise or anti-clockwise direction).

   Allow approximately *10-15 minutes* for this part of the exercise.

5. When the passage has been read ask the group to divide into groups of three.

6. Give each group a copy of the *'Discussion Sheet'* and allow them approximately *25 minutes* to work through it.

7. Ask everyone to return to the large group.

8. Ask each group to read out the three words they have chosen and write them clearly where everyone can see. Remember to allow time for clarifications.

   Below are a list of points that might be helpful to you in discussion in the larger group.

   What did people feel about reading the piece?
   What did they notice in listening to others?
   Did people try to work out which bit they would have to read?
   What happened after someone had read their piece?
   Could they understand the passage? If not, why?
   Does reading aloud make a difference to understanding?
   Were some people better than others? If so, why?
   What were the reactions?
   - "I felt stupid"?
   - "It's unfair. It's not a real situation"?

   How does this compare with the everyday experiences of a person with a reading difficulty?

   Allow approximately *10 minutes* for this part of the exercise.

9. Make sure everyone can see a copy of the *'Evaluation Sheet'* and ask them to follow the instructions. Allow approximately *5-10 minutes* for the evaluation.

MIRROR WRITING SHEET

Reading Exercise

The most overwhelming difficulty experienced by the slow reader is that the decoding of print is so laborious for him that comprehension of a passage is virtually impossible. The mechanical technique of reading creates a barrier to understanding. This exercise may help you to appreciate the problem. Your own comprehension of these sentences is probably severely threatened by your need to concentrate on the decoding problem which they present.

Kumburj Clarke.

DISCUSSION SHEET

1. How did you *feel* while you were reading?

2. How did you *feel* when another participant was better at reading than you?

3. How did you *feel* while you were waiting to read?

4. Choose one word for each of the above questions that expresses your feelings.

EVALUATION SHEET

1. What has this exercise taught you about the level of your awareness of people who may have a reading difficulty?

2. Think of one situation where you may have been responsible for creating a similar atmosphere to the one produced by this exercise.

1b

WRITING

TIME 55-60 min

● Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants to identify some of the feelings experienced by a person who has a writing difficulty.

● You will need:

* a large sheet of paper or a blackboard
* enough dictionaries
* copies of the *'Discussion Sheet* and
* copies of the *'Evaluation Sheet'* for everyone to see.

The Exercise

1. Briefly explain the purpose of the exercise.

2. Ask each person to write a short article on a topic of their choice. Point out that:-
   a. they should write with the opposite hand to that which they normally use
   b. any word of five letters or more should be looked up in a dictionary even if they know how to spell it.

   Allow approximately *15 minutes* for this part of the exercise.

3. Ask each person to swap articles with their neighbour and then ask each participant to read the article they have been given, to the other members of the group.

   (If the group is large it may be impossible to read out every article. It is suggested that you try to include as many as possible in the time allocated).

   Allow roughly *10 minutes* for this part of the exercise.

4. Ask participants to divide into groups of three.

5. Introduce the groups to the questions on the *'Discussion Sheet'* and allow approximately 25 minutes to work through them.

6. Ask everyone to return to the large group.

7. Ask each group to read out the three words they have chosen and write them clearly where everyone can see. Remember to allow time for clarifications. This should take about *10 minutes.*

8. Allow a further 5-10 minutes for everyone to work through the questions on the *'Evaluation Sheet'.*

DISCUSSION SHEET

1. How did you *feel* while you were writing?

2. How did you *feel* while your article was being read aloud to other members of the group?

3. How did you *feel* while you were waiting to have your article read aloud to other members of the group?

4. Choose one word for each of these questions that expresses your feeling.

EVALUATION SHEET

1. What has this exercise taught you about the level of your awareness of people who may have a writing difficulty.

2. Think of one similar situation where you have experienced the feelings identified in this exercise.

1c

BASIC MATHS

TIME 55-60 min

● Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to help you to identify some of the feelings experienced by someone who has difficulty with maths.

● You will need:

* a large sheet of paper or a blackboard
* enough copies of Take Away *Sheets A, B & C*
* enough copies of the *Discussion Sheet* and
* enough copies of the *Evaluation Sheet* for everyone to see

The Exercise

1. Briefly explain the purpose of the exercise.
2. Give each person a copy of *Take Away Sheet A* and *Take Away Sheet B.*
3. Explain that these sheets have examples and descriptions of two different ways of doing 'take aways'. Ask each person to find the method that is familiar to her. Allow about *5 minutes* for this.
4. Ask each person to hand back the sheet with their familiar method on it.
5. Give each person a copy of *Take Away Sheet C.* Ask them, working alone, to use the method new to them to do the calculations on *Take Away Sheet C.* Tell them to be ready in 15 minutes to 'teach' this new method to somebody else.
6. After 15 minutes, sort people into small groups and ask one person in each group to teach her 'new' method to the other group members.

   Not everyone will get a chance to teach - there won't be enough time and it gets tedious anyway. It doesn't matter - everyone has had the experience of tackling a new bit of maths. Spend about *15 minutes* on this part of the exercise.
7. Ask each group to work through the *Discussion Sheet,* spending about 10 minutes on this.
8. Ask everyone to come together again in the large group to compare notes on their feelings by writing up, where everyone can see them, all the words that people have used to describe their feelings. Allow about *10 minutes* for further discussion.
9. Allow *5-10 minutes* for everyone to work through the Evaluation Sheet.

DISCUSSION SHEET

1. How did you *feel* while everybody was trying to decide which method they knew best?

2. How did you *feel* when the group leader asked you to give back the sheet explaining that method?

3. How did you *feel* if you realised that somebody else was familiar with more/fewer methods than you?

4. How did you *feel* when you were trying to understand the method that was new to you?

5. How did you *feel* when you were preparing to teach this new method?

6. How did you *feel* when (if) you were teaching your new method?

7. Choose one word to describe how you felt in each of these situations.

TAKE AWAY SHEET A

$$\begin{array}{r} 6\ 3\ {}^{1}2 \\ -\ 2,7,5 \\ \hline 3\ 5\ 7 \end{array}$$

Start with the ones

5 from 2 can't be done; borrow 1 to make 12

5 from 12 leaves 7; put that down under the 5

Pay back the 1 to the 7; that makes 8

8 from 3 can't be done; borrow 1 to make 13

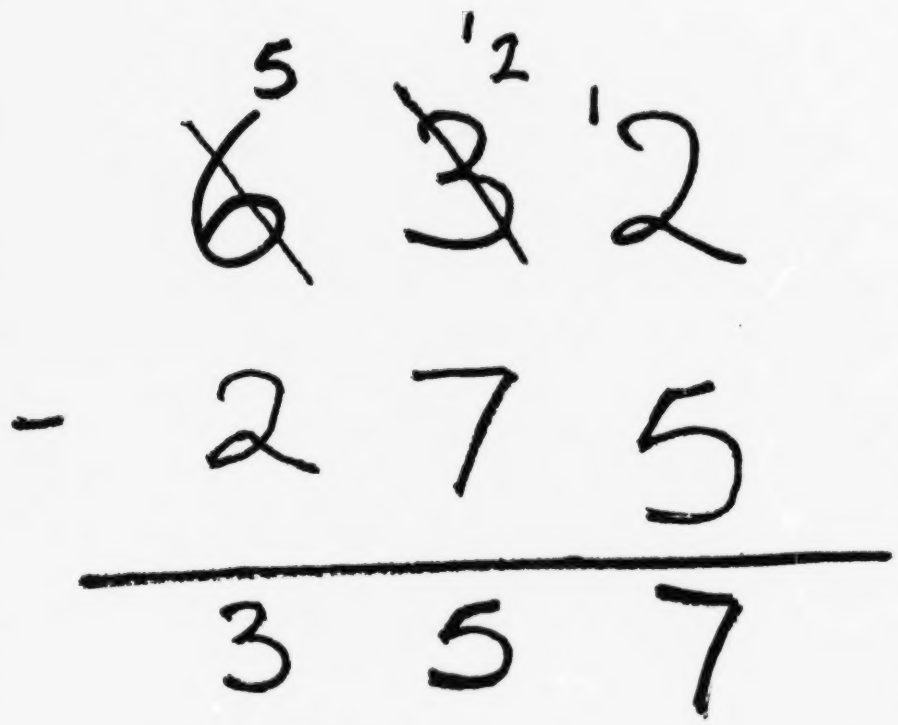
8 from 13 leaves 5; put that down under the 7

Pay back the 1 to the 2; that makes 3

3 from 6 leaves 3

The answer is 357

TAKE AWAY SHEET B



Start with the ones

5 from 2 can't be done; borrow 1 from the 3 to make 12

5 from 12 leaves 7; put that down under the 5

When the 1 was borrowed from the 3, that left 2

7 from 2 can't be done; borrow 1 from the 6 to make 12

7 from 12 leaves 5; put that down under the 7

When the 1 was borrowed from the 6, that left 5

2 from 5 leaves 3

So the answer is 357

TAKE AWAY SHEET C

$$\begin{array}{r} 42 \\ -\ 17 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 567 \\ -\ 258 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 400 \\ -\ 182 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 400 \\ -\ 399 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 50001 \\ -\ \ \ 201 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

EVALUATION SHEET

1. What has this taught you about your level of awareness of how people feel if they have difficulties with maths?

2. Think of one situation where you may have been responsible for creating a similar situation.

1d THE ROOM SEARCH TIME 55-60 min

● Purpose

The previous exercises have tried to make you aware of what it *feels* like to have a literacy or numeracy difficulty.

The purpose of this exercise is to make you aware of the extent to which literacy and numeracy skills are needed in order to carry out an everyday group activity.

● You will need:

* a large sheet of paper or a blackboard
* paper and pens for participants
* enough copies of the *'Discussion Sheet'* and of
* the *'Evaluation Sheet'* for everyone to see.

The Exercise

1. Briefly explain the purpose of the exercise.
2. Ask everyone to find a partner (or if the group is very small ask them to complete this part of the exercise on an individual basis).
3. Ask each pair to walk around the room making a list of everything which has writing or figures on it (eg notices, calendars, news-letters etc). If you meet in a room that is particularly bare, this might not take long. But have a go - you might be surprised. If necessary, you can list items from another room that you use. Allow approximately *20 minutes* for this part of the exercise.
4. Return to the large group.
5. Ask each pair to call out their list and write up all the items where everyone can see them. Allow *5-10 minutes* for this part of the exercise.
6. Divide into groups of three, making sure that each group can see a copy of the *'Discussion Sheet'* and give them *20-25 minutes* to work through the sheet.
7. Return to the large group and allow approximately *5-10 minutes* for people to share and clarify their points of view.
8. Allow approximately *5-10 minutes* for everyone to work through the *Evaluation Sheet.*

DISCUSSION SHEET

1. Were you surprised at the number and variety of items with writing or numbers on them?

2. What problems do you think you would find while using this room if you had difficulties with literacy or numeracy?

3. If you had difficulties with literacy and numeracy and you had to use this room, which of the feelings listed from the last three exercises do you think you would have experienced?

2c

FINDING ALTERNATIVES TO READING, WRITING AND BASIC MATHS

TIME 60-65 min

● Purpose

As we discovered in the last exercise, members of a group can be unknowingly left out because they do not have the confidence in their skills to allow them to take an active role in the group. If a group is aware that some of its members lack literacy and numeracy skills then the group should look for alternative ways to achieve their aim so that all members of the group can be involved in the activity.

The purpose of this exercise is to help you think about alternative forms of communication other than those based on literacy and numeracy.

● You will need:

- a large sheet of paper or a blackboard
- enough copies of the *Task Sheet*
- copies of the *Discussion Sheet* and of
- the *Evaluation Sheet* for everyone to see

The Exercise

1. Briefly explain the purpose of the exercise.

2. Get back into the same groups of three as in the last exercise.

3. Give each group a new copy of the *'Task Sheet'* and ask them to transfer the 'Task' list from the blackboard or flipchart to their own sheets.

4. Ask each group to fill in the 'How Task will be achieved' column, *BUT* with an activity that does not involve literacy or numeracy skills.

   Allow approximately *20 minutes* for this part of the exercise.

5. Ask everyone to return to the large group.

6. Draw a *'Task Sheet'* where everyone can see it and fill it in using the information from the various groups.

7. In the large group discuss the questions on the *'Discussion Sheet'*.
   Allow approximately *20 minutes* for this part of the exercise.

8 Allow *5-10 minutes* for everyone to work through the *'Evaluation Sheet'*.

EVALUATION SHEET

Answer the following questions:-

1. What were your expectations of this workshop?

2. Have your expectations been fulfilled?

3. Which parts of the workshop did you find most helpful? Why?

4. Which parts of the workshop didn't you find helpful? Why?

5. Was there any part of the workshop that you found difficult to understand? Can you say why?

6. Was there enough time allowed for each exercise?

7. Are you happy about the way in which the workshop was led? Do you have useful suggestions for the group leader(s) ?

8. Were the venue and facilities satisfactory? Do you have any useful suggestions that might be of help when organising future workshops?

9. Make a short list of things you have learnt from this workshop.

EVALUATION SHEET

1. What has this exercise taught you about the level of your awareness of people who may have a literacy and numeracy difficulty?

2. How aware would you say you have been about your working/ meeting place in relation to people who have difficulties with literacy and numeracy? Give yourself points out of ten.

TASK SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS:-

Your group is planning an open day, fill in below what tasks you think would have to be completed and how each task would be achieved.

TASK	*HOW TASK WILL BE ACHIEVED*
eg Invite a guest speaker	*Write a letter*

WORKING TOGETHER

This section helps you look at how groups work and how, without realising, they can prevent people from getting involved in their activities. It also helps you look for alternative ways of passing on information.

2a COMMUNICATION IN A GROUP TIME 60-65 min

● Purpose

Effective group work depends upon good communication skills.Communication involves two things: the giving of information and the receiving of information. We can give or receive information in a number of ways but if you walk into any local advice centre you will immediately notice that most of the information is given or received through the written word.

Good communication can only take place when both parties can de-code the information which is being passed on; if one of the parties cannot de-code this information then communication is restricted. This is often the case for a person with literacy and numeracy difficulties.

The purpose of this exercise is to help make participants aware of what happens to a group's performance when its channels of communication are restricted.

● You will need:

- a large sheet of paper or a blackboard
- a copy of each of the posters
- 3 large sheets of paper
- 3 thick marker pens
- 2 tables
- enough copies of the *'Evaluation Sheet'* and
- of the *'Discussion Sheet'* for everyone to see

DISCUSSION SHEET

1. Is it difficult for groups to find alternative means of communication other than those involving literacy and numeracy skills?

2. Turn to your neighbour and give four reasons why.

3. If a group never looks for alternative forms of communication what do you think will be the consequences for members who have literacy and numeracy difficulties?

4. You may find that some of the tasks on your list necessarily involve reading and writing. Think about the ways that everyone can be involved in these tasks, irrespective of their reading and writing abilities (eg you may need to write a letter of complaint. You don't need reading and writing skills to be able to decide what goes in the letter and how it should be worded).

The Exercise

1. Briefly explain the purpose of the exercise.

2. Ask participants to form three groups (NB each group should have a minimum of five people. If your group is too small to form three groups simply form one group and do all the three exercises).

3. Number the groups: 1, 2, and 3.

4. Ask group 1 to nominate an 'artist' and an 'instructor'. Explain to them the objective and rules of the game:-

Group 1

Objective:

For the artist to reproduce the poster which only the instructor is allowed to see.

Conditions:-

a. the instructor is the only member of the group allowed to look at the poster.

b. the instructor passes information to participant one, eg "draw a triangle in the top left-hand corner" This information is then passed on to participant two, and so on until it reaches the artist. Information must be passed each time in such a way that only the next person in the chain can hear it.

c. the artist must follow out the instruction, she must not communicate with any member of the group, she must not indicate that she has completed the instruction.

5. Put poster 1 on the table and ask group 1 to carry out the exercise while groups 2 and 3 watch. Allow approximately *5 minutes* for this part of the exercise.

6. Ask group 2 to nominate an 'artist' and an 'instructor'. Explain to them the objectives and rules of the game:-

Group 2

Objective:-

For the artist to reproduce the poster, which only the instructor is allowed to see.

Conditions:-

a. the instructor is the only member of the group allowed to look at the poster.

b. the instructor passes information to participant 1, eg "draw a triangle in the top left-hand corner". This information is then passed on to participant two and so on until it reaches the artist.

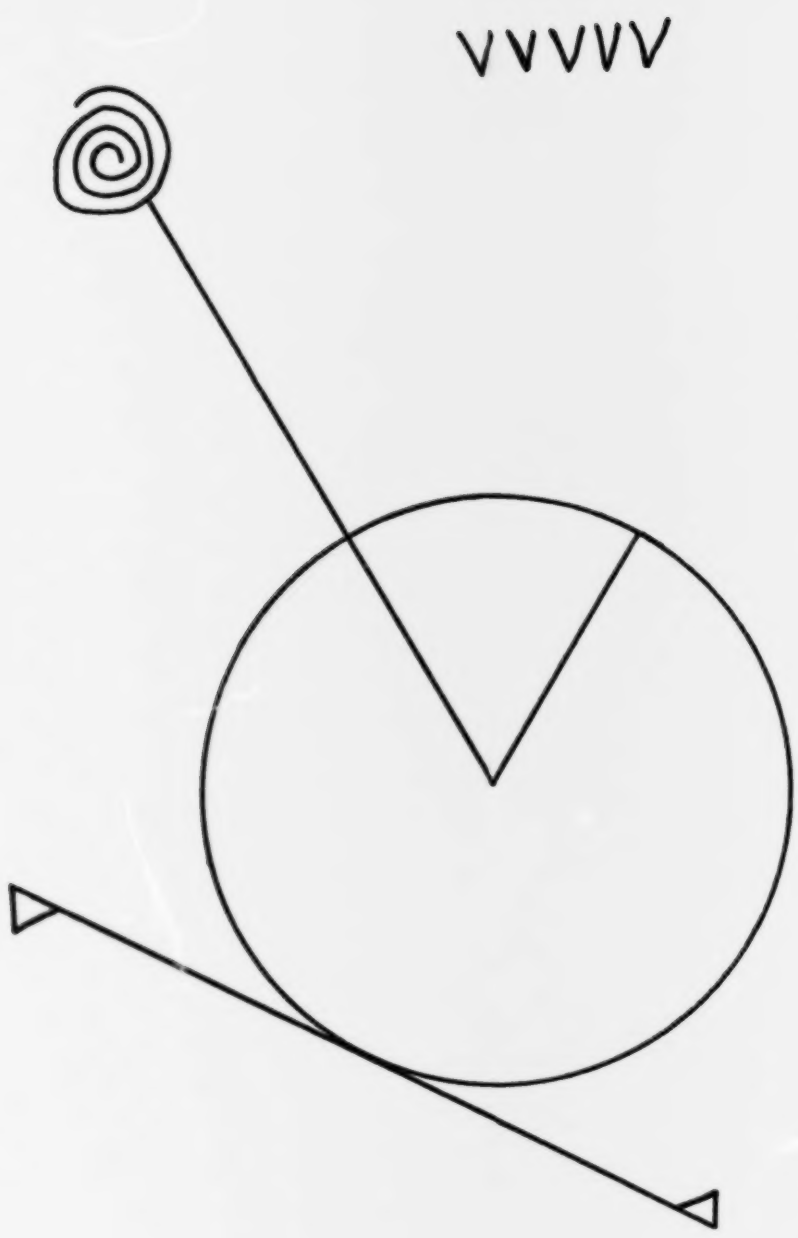
c. the artist must follow out the instruction, she must not communicate with any member of the group. *But if she does not understand the instruction she can knock on the desk to indicate to the instruc*tor that she has not understood. The instructor can then repeat the instruction.

7. Put poster two on the table and ask group 2 to carry out the exercise while groups 1 and 3 watch. Allow approximately *10 to 15 minutes* for this part of the exercise

EVALUATION SHEET

1. What has this exercise taught you about the need for a group to discover alternative forms of communication besides those involving literacy and numeracy skills, in order to allow each individual to participate fully in its activities?

2. Think of one similar situation where group members can be left out because alternative forms of communication have not been explored.



POSTER 1

MAKING A CHANGE

This section helps you look in more detail at your own group. It helps you to decide on - and put into practice - one change that you want to make.

3a THE GROUP AWARENESS QUESTIONNAIRE TIME 55-60 min

● Purpose

Often a team can become so involved in what it is doing that it does not have time to discuss how effectively it works as a group. The purpose of this exercise is to allow the group to re-cap on the first two sections of the pack and to think about how aware they have been of literacy and numeracy difficulties in the group and whether they have tackled the problems effectively.

● You will need:

- a large sheet of paper or a blackboard
- enough copies of the *Group Awareness Questionnaire*
- copies of the *Discussion Sheet* and
- copies of the *Evaluation Sheet* for everyone to see

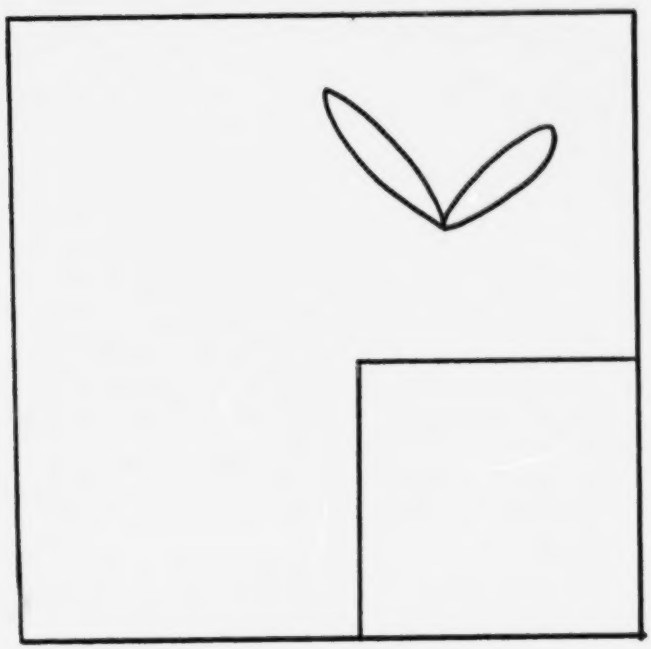
The Exercise

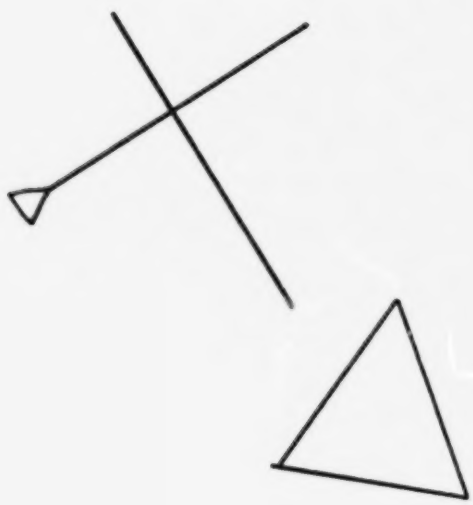
1. Briefly explain the purpose of the questionnaire
2. Give each person a copy of the Group Awareness Questionnaire and ask them to complete the instructions.
   Allow approximately *15-20 mins.* for this part of the exercise.
3. Write the numbers 1-8 on the large sheet of paper or blackboard
4. Ask everyone to return to the group.
5. Read aloud each question on the questionnaire and ask each participant to say which letter they ticked. Write each letter under the appropriate number.
6. When the list is complete, ask people to stay in the large group and discuss the questions on the *Discussion Sheet*

   Allow roughly 30 minutes for this part of the exercise.

POSTER 2

POSTER 3





EVALUATION SHEET

1. What has this exercise taught you about communication?

2. Think of a real-life situation for each of the role plays.

8. Ask group 3 to nominate an 'artist' and explain to them the objective and rules of the game.

Group 3

Objective:

For the artist to reproduce the poster which only the group is allowed to see.

Conditions:

a. all members of the group except the artist are allowed to look at the poster

b. all members of the group are allowed to give instructions to the artist

c. the artist still sits with her back to the other participants but she is allowed full communication

9. Put poster 3 on the table and ask group 3 to carry out the exercise while groups 1 and 2 watch. Allow approximately *20 minutes* for this part of the exercise.

10. Ask everyone to come together. In the large group discuss the questions on the *Discussion Sheet* and record the answers where everyone can see them. Allow approximately *20 minutes* for this part of the exercise.

11. Take *5-10 minutes* for everyone to work through the *Evaluation Sheet.*

DISCUSSION SHEET

1. Describe what you saw in each of the role plays.

2. Which of the groups was most successful in carrying out their task? Why?

3. Why were the other two groups less successful in carrying out their task? Why?

2b

AN EVERYDAY TASK

TIME 55-60 min

● Purpose

When a group is planning an activity, it is very often the case that one or two members of the group will take on most of the work. If we were to look closer at this situation, we might find that this is because some members of the group, although willing to help, cannot because they do not have enough confidence in their literacy and numeracy skills to deal with the large amounts of reading and writing needed to complete the various tasks.

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants reflect on the number of activities involving literacy and numeracy skills that arise when a group is involved in performing a simple, everyday task.

● You will need:

- a large sheet of paper or a blackboard
- enough copies of the *'Task Sheet'*
- copies of the *'Discussion Sheet'* and of
- the *"Evaluation Sheet'* for everyone to see.

The Exercise

1. Briefly explain the purpose of the exercise
2. Form groups of three. Give each group a copy of the *Task Sheet* and ask them to follow the instructions.
   Allow *30 minutes* for this part of the exercise.
3. Ask everyone to return to the large group.
4. Draw a *Task Sheet* on the large sheet of paper or blackboard and fill it in using the information from the various groups.
5. In the large group discuss the questions outlined on the *Discussion Sheet.*
   Allow approximately *20 minutes* for this part of the exercise.
6. Give each of the small groups a copy of the *'Evaluation Sheet'* and ask them to follow the instructions.
   Allow *5-10 minutes* for the evaluation.

TASK SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS:-

Your group is planning an open day, fill in below what tasks you think would have to be completed and how each task would be achieved.

TASK	*HOW TASK WILL BE ACHIEVED*
eg Invite a guest speaker	*Write a letter*

DISCUSSION SHEET

NB When writing up the answers from the groups, mark the answers to question 'a' with an (x) in red and mark the answers to question 'b' with an (x) in blue.

a. How many of the tasks do not involve literacy or numeracy skills?

b. If you had a literacy or numeracy difficulty how many of the tasks would you not be able to complete?

c. If you were a member of this work group and you had a literacy or numeracy difficulty how do you think other members of the group would see you?

EVALUATION SHEET

1. What has this exercise taught you about the way a person with literacy or numeracy difficulties interacts in group activities?

2. Think of one similar situation that you have met in your everyday activities.

GROUP AWARENESS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How aware have you been about what it feels like to have a literacy and numeracy problem?
   a. never gave it any thought
   b. quite aware
   c. very aware

2. How would you have described the intellectual ability of a person who has a literacy or numeracy difficulty?
   a. stupid
   b. a slow learner
   c. intelligence cannot be measured on literacy and numeracy skills alone

3. To what degree have literacy and numeracy related problems caused a breakdown in communication in your group?
   a. never
   b. rarely
   c. almost every day

4. How well does your group use contributions from members with literacy and numeracy difficulties?
   a. we ignore them
   b. we use some ideas
   c. we always try to use everyone's ideas

5. Have your office/meeting-rooms etc been designed in such a way as to allow them to be fully used by people with literacy and numeracy difficulties?
   a. no
   b. some areas
   c. all areas

6. What steps have you taken to make general information more available to people with literacy and numeracy difficulties?
   a. none
   b. some
   c. we make all our information accessible

7. How embarrassed is your group to discuss who has and who doesn't have a literacy and numeracy difficulty.
   a. very embarrassed
   b. embarrassed, but we are willing to discuss it
   c. not embarrassed at all

8. What steps have you taken to support those members of your group who want to improve their literacy and numeracy skills?
   a. none
   b. some initiatives
   c. many initiatives

DISCUSSION SHEET

1. What aspects of the questionnaire do most participants agree on?

2. What aspects of the questionnaire does the group disagree on?

3. How would you evaluate your awareness? Give yourselves points out of ten.

EVALUATION SHEET

1. What has this exercise taught you about the level of your awareness of people who may have a reading or writing difficulty.

2. Think of one similar situation where you have experienced the feelings identified in this exercise.

3b CHOOSING AN OBJECTIVE TIME 55-60 min

● Purpose

The aim of any workshop should be to help to *think*, *discuss* and *act* upon an issue that the group finds important. Many workshops often fail in their task because they only stimulate a group to *think* but not to *act*. The aim of this exercise is to allow the group to decide on one clear goal which they feel they could achieve.

● You will need:

- a large sheet of paper or a blackboard
- enough copies of the *What Can We Do* sheet

The Exercise

1. Briefly explain the purpose of the exercise.
2. Divide into groups of three.
3. Give each group a copy of the *What Can We Do* sheet and ask them to fill it in. (Allow approximately *20 minutes* for this part of the exercise).
4. Ask everyone to return to the large group.
5. Put the three questions outlined on the *What Can We Do* sheet on the large sheet of paper or blackboard and ask each group to feed back their various suggestions. Write each suggestion under the appropriate heading. (Allow approximately *20 minutes* for this part of the exercise).
6. Divide again into three groups. Ask each group to choose one of the three lists that have been written up.
7. Ask each group to underline one of the objectives in their list which they feel they could tackle as a group. (Allow *10 minutes* for this part of the exercise).
8. Ask everyone to return to the large group. Ask each group to feed back the objective they have chosen and then underline it on the lists on the large sheet of paper or blackboard.
9. In the large group ask people to choose one out of the three objectives which they feel they could tackle as a group. This could be done as a simple show of hands.
10. Write their choice on the flipchart or blackboard.

OUR OBJECTIVE IS.....

WHAT CAN WE DO TO:-

Increase our awareness of the problems faced by people with literacy and numeracy difficulties.	Make our office/meeting-rooms/information more accessible to people with literacy and numeracy difficulties.	Support members of our group or people who use our facilities who want to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

3c

PLAN OF ACTION

TIME 55-60 min

● Purpose

Every group has to make decisions and the way in which these decisions are made will have a major effect on the commitment of the members to the life and work of the group. If we have shared in the process of making a decision we are far more likely to carry it out. The aim of this exercise is to involve all members of the group in making a *practical plan of action* which will enable them to achieve the objective they decided on in the last exercise.

● You will need:

- a large sheet of paper or a blackboard
- enough copies of the *Group Planning Sheet*

The Exercise

1. Briefly explain the purpose of the exercise.
2. Divide into groups of three. Give each group a copy of the *Group Planning Sheet* and ask them to fill it in.
   (Allow about 30 minutes for this part of the exercise).
3. While the groups are working, copy the *Group Planning Sheet* onto the large sheet of paper or blackboard.
4. Ask everyone to return to the large group.
5. Ask each group to feed back their suggestions and transfer them onto the large Group Planning Sheet that you have written up.
6. Allow participants to clarify any issues and continue until everyone is happy with the final draft.
   (Allow about *25-30 minutes* for this part of the exercise).
7. At the end of this exercise the group should have a clear list of objectives, a list of people or groups who will carry them out and time limits placed on each task.

GROUP PLANNING SHEET

Our objective is to:-

What are the needs?

What are the problems?

List the possible ways of achieving this objective.

Who will do What, When and Where?

At what point do we need to evaluate? Who should be involved in the evaluation?

LOOKING BACK - AND FORWARDS

This section gives you a chance to think about how successful this pack has been in raising awareness of literacy- and numeracy-related problems and in helping to identify changes that your group could make.

4a EVALUATION Time 25-40 min

● Purpose

The exercises in this pack were designed to help a group think about their awareness of problems related to literacy and numeracy; to discover new ways of overcoming these problems and finally to bring the group to see changes that they could make. In order to discover if the workshop has been successful or not you will need to allow the group some time to evaluate the overall effect of the pack. The purpose of this exercise is to give participants the chance to say how effective this workshop has been in fulfilling the basic aims and objectives of the pack.

● You will need:

- a large sheet of paper or a blackboard
- enough copies of the *Evaluation Sheet*.

The Exercise

1. Briefly explain the purpose of the exercise.
2. Give each person a copy of the *Evaluation Sheet* and ask them to follow the instructions.
   Allow approximately *10-15 mins.* for this part of the exercise.
3. Ask everyone to return to the large group.
4. Read aloud each question on the evaluation sheet and ask everyone to share their views. Write the various opinions on the large sheet of paper or blackboard.
5. Allow people time to share and clarify issues.

· Allow approximately *20 minutes* for this part of the exercise.

EVALUATION OF THE RESOURCE PACK

4b

The authors would be very interested to hear how this resource pack has been useful to your group. We would also very much welcome any ideas or comments that would serve to improve the pack. We would therefore appreciate it if you could help us to evaluate the pack by completing this form as frankly as possible and returning it to the address below.

1. I have used this pack with the following group:

   .....

2. The group met and sessions lasted for:

   .....

3. The parts of the pack the group found most helpful were:

   .....

4 The parts of the pack the group didn't find helpful were:

   .....

5. The parts of the workshop the group found difficult to understand were:

   .....

6. The parts of the workshop the group found most enjoyable were:

   .....

7. The objectives the group has decided to take on are:

   .....

8. Any other comment:

   .....

   .....

To: **NFVLS**
Cambridge House
131 Camberwell Road
London SE5 0HF

From: **Name** .....

Group .....

Address .....

.....

.....

This pack aims to help your group to work more effectively by enabling everyone, whatever their level of reading, writing or maths, to take a full part in its activities. It also aims to create the conditions whereby people can improve their skills by putting them into practice as part of their activities within a group who are willing to offer support and to share their own skills.

The pack does not aim to, and cannot, replace the basic education classes provided by local education authorities and by voluntary organisations for those who want to work in a concentrated way on their reading, writing or maths.

If anyone in your group feels that they would like to work more specifically on these areas you can contact your local scheme and see what they have to offer. To find out your nearest scheme you can contact:

your local library
the local education offices
the Citizens Advice Bureau

If none of these are able to help, you can contact

Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU),
Kingsbourne House, 229/231 High Holborn,
London WC1V 7DA.
(01 405 4017)

or

NFVLS
Cambridge House, 131 Camberwell Road,
London SE5 0HF.
(01 703 8083)

NFVLS is a national body concerned with basic education in the voluntary sector. It has 100 member groups who are actively involved in helping adults to gain literacy and numeracy skills.

It also offers a training and advisory service to other organisations who, without becoming basic education providers, would like to take account of - and give support to - the individuals and groups with whom they work who may experience difficulties with literacy and numeracy.

Recent research has shown that there are around six million adults in the UK who have difficulties with reading, writing or maths. Of these, around 100,000 are involved at any one time in learning through an adult literacy or numeracy scheme.

Many more, however, are members of local voluntary organisations or community groups.

Community groups are often aware that:

- there are members of the group who lack confidence in their reading, writing or maths.
- most people, whatever their level of basic skills, have plenty to offer by way of experience and ideas.
- some people appear more willing than others to offer their ideas.

They may not be aware that:

- a lack of confidence in basic skills can seriously affect your confidence in taking on other activities
- this may be affecting some of their members' level of involvement in the group.
- there are different ways of tackling tasks so that people with reading, writing or number difficulties are not excluded.
- as a group, they can help their members to gain confidence in basic skills.

WRITE THEN - LET'S CHANGE! offers an opportunity to consider the effects that different levels of literacy and numeracy have on community groups and on the individuals within them.

WRITE THEN - LET'S CHANGE! helps you to find ways of working which will enable all members of a group to play an equal part, whatever their levels of basic skills.

Price: £5.00